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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 19 January 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In the past week, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has been marked by a systematic effort on the part of Israel, the occupying Power, to obstruct and thwart the planned Legislative Council elections, scheduled for 25 January, and the serious efforts of the Palestinian Authority to maintain calm and resume negotiations. This systematic Israeli effort has entailed the harassment and detention of election candidates and their staff, the escalation of violence against Palestinian population centres through more frequent and deadly incursions, the extrajudicial execution of Palestinian activists and the continued restrictions on movement imposed on Palestinian civilians.

Despite international efforts made to ensure that Israel, the occupying Power, fulfils its obligations regarding the facilitation of Palestinian elections in occupied East Jerusalem, the occupying Power has announced that it will allow elections, with the stipulation that it will decide who can run election campaigns or participate in the elections come 25 January. This announcement, rejected by the Palestinian Authority as it stands in stark contravention of the signed agreement regarding elections also goes against the spirit of democracy that the Palestinian people and the international community are working tirelessly to cement in the Palestinian political system. Additionally, the actions of the Israeli occupation forces in this regard have been reprehensible in occupied East Jerusalem, specifically, and the rest of the West Bank, more generally. In the past week, candidates from a variety of political groups and backgrounds have been hassled, harassed and, even worse, arrested. Campaign offices in occupied East Jerusalem have also been repeatedly raided and closed down by the occupation forces. Here, we must stress that these unwarranted and antagonistic actions by the occupying Power threaten Palestinian democracy and more immediately the prospect of holding elections altogether on schedule

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Concurrent with these developments is the increase in military assaults carried out by Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps. Such assaults continuously cause the death and injury of innocent civilians in addition to the destruction of property and the long-term devastation brought on the local economy. On 15 January, one such military assault turned into a devastating tragedy for one family in the village of Rujeeb, near Nablus. During the dawn hours of that day, Israeli Special Forces raided and encircled the home of the Al-Halabi family in Rujeeb. When Nawal, 50 years old, opened the door to see the reason behind the commotion around her house, she was shot 15 times and killed by the occupation soldiers. Her son Fawzi, 20 years old, was also shot dead. The tragedy did not stop there, as the occupation soldiers continued to fire indiscriminately at family members attempting to rescue the mother and son as well as signal to the soldiers that they were unarmed civilians. The results were devastating, with the injury of Munjed, the father, in addition to three of his sons and a daughter. The tragedy of the Al-Halabi family shocked the entire nation and made calls for continued calm on the Palestinian side seem futile, as Palestinian families continue to witness such untold tragedies befall innocent families across the country without cause or justification.

In addition to the military incursions, Israeli occupation forces continue to carry out Israel's illegal policy of extrajudicial execution of Palestinians. The latest such execution was carried out against 23-year-old Thabet Salah Al-Din in Tulkarm on 17 January. His assassination, along with the assaults against other Palestinians, has fuelled anger in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and further complicated official Palestinian steps taken to restore calm and order. More importantly, these extrajudicial executions are in grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

On another front, Israel's flagrant violations of its obligations to the road map and international law have also produced an intensely violent situation in Hebron. For the past five days, Israeli settlers in Hebron's old city have been burning down Palestinian homes and shops, stoning Palestinian families and wreaking havoc in the city's old quarters. This situation highlights the danger that the continued illegal Israeli settlement activities pose to the safety of Palestinian civilians and their properties across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It must also serve as further incentive for the international community to insist that Israel respect its obligations towards international law, particularly international humanitarian law, and cease the illegal settlement activities, including the construction of the wall, which the International Court of Justice deemed illegal on 9 July 2004.

The international community, in accordance with the rules and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, has clear responsibilities in terms of ensuring the proper conduct of the occupying Power, including compliance with its legal obligations and commitments. Moreover, measures must be taken to prevent the further escalation of this Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian civilian population that remains helpless and without any protection from the brute force of the occupying Power. The continuation and intensification of Israel's military campaign against the Palestinian people will clearly lead only to more bloodshed and to more suffering by innocent civilians on both sides, which should be avoided at all costs.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 229 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 13 January 2006 (A/ES-10/315-S/2006/20), constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my profound regret to inform you that since our last letter to you, at least six more Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 3,761. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified are listed in the annex to the present letter.)

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Annex to the identical letters dated 19 January 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (Friday, 13 January, to Tuesday, 17 January 2006)

Friday, 13 January 2006

1. Jamal Al-Shaikh Al-Aid
2. Moataz Tahcine Abu Khalil
3. Ali Abdelatif Abu Khalil

Sunday, 15 January 2006

1. Nawal Douikate Al-Halabi
2. Fawzi Monjid Al-Halabi

Tuesday, 17 January 2006

Thabet Mahmoud Salah Al-Din Iyada